more than a *locum tenens* and repeatedly a deviation from the usual course of promotion was made to avoid breaking the rule. Obviously such a procedure rendered it difficult for any official plotting rebellion to appeal to provincial loyalties. Appointments to office were, moreover, only for the term of three years, and while the assignment was often renewed, it seems only infrequently to have been for more than an additional *trienniurn.* Then, too, both Peking and the provincial authorities sent out messengers from time to time on special errands. Some of the imperial commissioners might even outrank a Viceroy. The censors might impeach provincial officials, and the right of officials of certain ranks to memorialize the throne gave a recognized channel for voicing criticisms. An elaborate system of checks and balances existed—of Viceroy and Governor against each other, and of the other high provincial officials on one another and on the Governor and the Viceroy. Moreover, while there were hereditary titles, especially among the Manchus, a post in the civil service did not go automatically with them, and members of the imperial family could not hold office in the provinces. Then, in spite of all the authority given them, Peking held the high provincial officials strictly accountable for whatever happened in their jurisdictions. Certain decisions, such as final action on many cases involving capital punishment, were reserved to the capital. These safeguards did not prevent rebellion, but they must have done much to minimize its frequency and to hold together, with a nice balance between needed local initiative and responsibility to a central authority, the large area that was China proper.

In theory and to a large extent in practice, the members of this impressive hierarchy of civil officials were recruited through an elaborate and gruelling system of examinations. Three main sets of tests led to what roughly correspond to the degrees awarded by Western universities. The three "degrees" were *ksiu ts'aLchu jen,* and *chin skih,* and are sometimes, but far from accurately, said to be equivalent to the bachelor's, master's, and doctor's degrees of the Occident. In addition to these three, as variations from them or as subdivisions of them, were other stages, each designated by a distinct title.